PANEL OF CHAIRMEN.

PRESIDENT: Under rule 3 (2) of the Legislative Rules, I have nominated Mr. P. K. Narayana Pillai and Mr. S. Chattanatha Karayalar as the panel of Chairmen for the current session.

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT.

PRESIDENT: Before announcing the procedure to be followed in this House in discussing the Budget Estimates presented last Tuesday by the Financial Secretary, I propose to give my rulings on certain points which arose during the last meeting as I had promised to give at this Session.

One of the points raised was whether it was in order for the Government to answer an interpellation by laying a Statement on the Table, even though the interpellation itself did not ask for such a statement. I looked into the Rules and Standing Orders governing the conduct of business in the House and I find no provision to enable the Chair to compel the Government member, or for the matter of that any member, to give answers in any particular manner. Questions are admitted by me as President when they satisfy the Rules and Standing Orders. Whether Honourable Members are able to extract satisfactory replies from Government is a totally different matter in regard to which the Chair has no legal responsibility. That all reasonable discretion should be given to the members on the official side as well as on the non-official side in the matter of answering questions will, I believe, be readily conceded. In regard to the practice of laying a Statement on the Table, it will be recognised that, in fairness to the House and in order to save valuable time, it may be necessary to adopt the expedient rather than take up the time of the House by reading lengthy statements and lists. Upon the specific point raised, I should also say that it is a common practice in Legislative Chambers in British India to answer questions, including starred questions, by laying Statements on the Table, even though the interpellation itself did not ask for such a statement. I may add that when, on one occasion, a member complained in the Indian Legislative Assembly that the mere laying of a Statement on the Table was not sufficient answer in respect of starred questions and claimed that the Statement should at least be read in the House, it was held that the procedure of laying the Statement on the Table was usual and had to be accepted as correct. In the circumstances, I have to rule that it is perfectly in order for Government to answer an interpellation by laying a Statement on the Table, even though the interpellation itself did not ask for such a statement. But, I feel confident that such a procedure would be adopted by Government only rarely and when absolutely necessary.

In regard to the procedure to be followed for laying Statements on the Table, I had already ruled that such Statements are laid by handing over the statements at the Secretary's Table. I have looked into the matter again and find that in the Indian Legislative

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